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## THE LAST STROKE OF FORTUNE.

Thirty years ago, an old house was standing in Cologne, which showed to the street a frontage of five small windows. It was the house in which the first painter of the Flemish school, the immortal Rubens—was born, A. D. 1577. Sixty years later than this date, the ground floor was occupied by two old people—a shoemaker and his wife. The upper story, which was usually let to lodgers, was empty at the time we write of. Two, however, occupied the garret. The evening was cold and wet, and the shoemaker and his wife were sitting together in the room.

"You had better go up stairs again," said the man to his wife, "and see how the poor lady is. The old gentleman went out early, and has not been in since. Has she not taken anything?"

"It is only half an hour since I was upstairs, and he had not come in. I took her some broth up at noon, but she hardly touched it, and I was up again at three; she was asleep then, and at five she said she should not want anything more."

"Poor lady! This time of year, and neither fire nor warm clothes, and not even a decent body to her! Have you noticed the respect with which the old gentleman treats her?"

"If she wants for anything it is her own fault. That ring she wears on her finger would get her the best of everything."

Then came a knock at the door; the woman admitted the old man who had just spoken of, whose grizzled beard fell upon his tarnished velvet coat. The hostess sadly wanted to have a little gossip with him, but he passed by, and bidding them a short "Good night," he disappeared up the steep and crooked staircase. On entering the chamber above, a feeble voice inquired the cause of his long absence.

"I could not help it," he said, "I had been copying manuscript, and as I was on my way to a friend's house, I was obliged to stop to raise the money to go on. I have now the money, and I will go on."

"I am cold," he said, "I will make you something which you must take directly."

The flame of a small tin lamp sufficed to heat some water, and the patient, having taken what the old man had provided, was gently covered up by him with all the clothes and articles of dress he could find. He stood by her motionless till he perceived that she was fast asleep, and indeed long after; he then retired into a small closet, and sought repose on the hard floor.

At that morning the lady was so much better that her attendant proposed she should endeavor to leave the house, and go to her own place. She succeeded in getting her horse as far as the Place St. Cecilia. It was seldom that she left the house, for notwithstanding the meanness of her dress, there was that about her carriage which rendered it difficult to avoid unpleasant observation.

"Do you see that person yonder?" she said suddenly. "If I am not much mistaken it is certainly the Duke of Guise."

The stranger's attention had also been attracted, and he had now approached them. "Parbleu!" said he, "why that is Mascal. What are you married?"

"He does not know me," sighed the lady. "Mascal has been altered. He is now a single man in the duke's ear, and he started at me as if struck by a thunderbolt, but instantly recovering himself, he hastily uncovered, and bowed nearly to the ground."

"I beg your forgiveness," he said, "but my eyes are grown so weak, and I could so little expect to have the honor of meeting you."

"For the love of God," interrupted the lady, hastily, "name me not here. A title would too strangely contrast with my present circumstances. Have you been long in Cologne?"

"Three days. I am on my way from Italy. I took refuge there when our common enemy drove me forth, and confiscated all my earthly goods. I am going to Brussels."

"And what are your adventures from France? Is he still in the hands of that wretched castrated?"

"He is in the zenith of his power," said the lady. "See, my lord duke, your fortunes and my own are much alike. You, the son of a man who had not too much despised danger, and I, at once the Queen's mistress, and the nation in the universe, and now both of us alike, but adieu," she said suddenly, and drawing herself up, "the sight of you, my lord duke, has refreshed me much, and I pray that fortune once more may smile upon your steps."

"Permit me to attend the lady's features, as she answered, with a gentle command to the duke to leave her, and to take her to her carriage. Guise bowed low, and taking the lady's hand, he pressed it reverently to his lips. At the corner of the street he met some one to whom he pointed out the old lady, and then hastened away."

The next morning a knock at the door announced a person inquiring for Monsieur Mascal; she had a small packet for him, and a billet. Inside this was distinctly written: "Two hundred louis d'ors constitute the whole of my fortune: one hundred I send for your use."

The sum thus obtained sufficed to supply the needs of the pair for two long years. But the last louis had been changed, and the lady and her companion were still without friendly succor. The shoemaker and his wife had undertaken a journey to Aix la Chapelle, to take up some small legacy. It was the 13th February, 1642. A low sound of moaning might have been heard issuing from the garret; a withered figure, like a skeleton than a thing of flesh and blood, was lying on a wretched bed of straw, in the agonies of death. The moans grew more and more indistinct; a slight rattle in the throat was at length the only audible sound, and this also ceased. An hour later an old man, dressed in rags and tatters, entered the chamber. One only word had escaped his lips: "Nothing," he uttered, and he lay down listlessly, but in a moment seized an arm of the corpse with an almost convulsive motion, and letting it suddenly fall, he cried—"Dead, dead, of hunger, cold, and starvation!"

And this lady was Mary de Medicis, wife of Henry IV., Queen Regent of France; mother of Louis XIII., of Isabelle, Queen of Spain; of Henrietta, Queen of England, of Christina, Duchess of Savoy; of Gaston, Duke of Orléans; dead of hunger, cold and misery; and yet Louis XIII., the cowardly tool of Richelieu, his mother's murderer, is still called "the Just."

## A WOMAN OF NERVE.

Mrs. Caroline C. Stranburg, wife of P. P. Stranburg, of this city, says the Bloomington, Ill., Pantagraph, was a passenger on the Pennsylvania, which was burned to the water's edge on Sunday morning, 12th instant. Mrs. S. left her berth just before the explosion took place, and when she heard the report, which shook every piece of timber in the boat, she caught hold of her little child, which was only two months old, and rushed into the ladies cabin, at the very moment that a large piece of machinery came crashing through the floor. She ran to the captain's room and told him that the boat was on fire, but he said she was mistaken, and advised her to be calm. She said she was not mistaken, and her manner was so earnest that the captain, thinking she was correct, went down to the boiler deck. He returned in a short time, and remarked to Mrs. S.: "There is no danger now—the fire has been subdued. Mrs. S., however, would not be satisfied; she insisted that the boat was in flames, and told the passengers. As she finished speaking, the flames broke through the cabin door, and in less than a minute the cabin was filled with smoke. She saw that the time for action had arrived, and she knew that her life and that of her child depended upon her own exertions; so she went down to the private staircase, and was fortunate enough to reach the boiler deck in safety. Knowing that she would perish by fire if she stayed on the boat, she determined to leave it and run the risk of meeting her death by another method. She accordingly seized a board about seven feet long and eight or ten inches wide, and grasping her child with one arm and the board with the other, she jumped overboard. The water was very rapid, and Mrs. S. had as much as she could do to keep herself afloat above the surface; but she proved equal to the dangerous situation in which she was placed, and her perilous journey down the river would not have been attended with half the danger had it been, if her unselfish heart had not prompted her to save a man who was unable to save himself. As she floated along, she saw a man struggling in the water, and she knew from his movements that he was too much exhausted to save himself from going to the bottom; so she generously and nobly jeopardized her life to save his; she grasped him by the arm, at the risk of being pulled down by her frail support, and assisted him to get up to the piece of plank that she had used to save herself. She then laid the man on the surface of the Father of Waters. After floating for an hour and a half, the three rescued by some men, who, having heard the explosion, launched a small boat and started up stream to render assistance to the unfortunate sufferers. When the man who was rescued by Mrs. S. placed his feet in the boat, he tried to express his gratitude, which was belied by his preserver; but his heart was so full of thankfulness that his tongue refused to give utterance to his grateful feelings. Mrs. Stranburg left this city about three months ago, and went to Clinton, Mississippi, her birthplace, where her relatives reside. She took passage on the Pennsylvania, at Vicksburg, and was fortunate enough to arrive at her own house in this city, on Monday evening. Her conduct entitles her to the admiration of all who can appreciate a noble act.

THE FALLEN GIRLS OF PARIS.

A Paris correspondent makes the following highly interesting statements:

In London, my lady dare walk out unattended after 10 o'clock in the evening, and after 11 o'clock she will have her eyes and ears insulted, no matter how well attended; while at Paris she may remain in the streets to any hour of the night, and neither have eyes offended nor her ears insulted.

How is this happy result accomplished? In 1851, the police register of the police of Paris showed 4,300 public girls, or "belle filles," number now may be about 2,000. These girls, and the houses in which they live, are submitted to a series of stringent laws, which renders them innoxious and inoffensive to the community—the police adopting the principle that, since it is impossible to suppress the evil, it should be rendered as inoffensive as possible.

All these houses are obliged to be closed at 11 o'clock precisely. The girls are obliged to remain in the house, and the windows are always covered with blinds, night and day. A few girls are permitted, here and there, to walk up and down, in front of their door, from 7 to 10 o'clock precisely, but it is against the law to go out after 11 o'clock. The girls are visited once a week by a medical and an ordinary inspector—real inspectors, appointed by Government, and not humbugging wall politicians.

Another class of girls, and much the larger class, are those who frequent the public baths, public lodgings, and theatres, who are not submitted to the ordinary sanitary regulations. But this class is no more permitted than the rest, either in the street or at their favorite evening resorts, to accost people for the purposes of commerce. The streets and the public baths are full of policemen in citizens dress, and the law in regard to addressing people, and to put their names on the police books, thus requiring them to take out a license, and to submit to all the police regulations in the new class to which they have entered. As a girl never knows when an officer's eye may be upon her, she takes care not to violate it, if possible, this law prohibiting solicitations in public places. This class is always elegantly dressed—it is notorious even that they are the first to imitate and to propagate those very fashions which make the tour of the world as the latest Paris modes. Many of them are reserved and elegant in their manners, and require a punctiliousness of etiquette which would not be out of place in the most aristocratic saloon. But one of the great aids to the Paris police, in the maintenance of public decency in this class, is the fact that they do not use strong drinks; a drunken public woman is never seen. As liquor is the greatest debaser of mankind, this one fact, which is the result of the law, has done more to purify the morals of the Parisian woman than any other measure.

THE MORALS OF CHICAGO.—The Chicago Times makes revelations implicating the Mayor of the city, one of his police deputies who is a deacon of the church, and other parties, in a most degrading and infamous scheme to procure evidence against certain parties for the violation of law. The fact-stated were brought out on a trial before the Recorder. It seems from the evidence adduced that Mayor Haines and Deacon Ambrose employed one Jas. Brown to visit respectable houses for the purpose of cohabitation with the inmates, in order to secure personal knowledge which would admit of no doubt, at least in the conviction of the poor fallen creatures. Deacon Ambrose admits that he did so, and received from Deacon Ambrose "nine dollars per week and expenses." This money came out of the city treasury, and Brown has been thus employed since the middle of March.

IT is there is one way by which conscription is kept out of Egypt. The regulations require that the person shall have a left eye and right forefinger. The result is that the cunning Arab forefinger cuts off the right hand forefinger and puts out the eye of the person of the grown up males in Egypt are thus mutilated:

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